

Seattle Light Rail Review Panel

Meeting Notes for June 7, 2000

Agenda Items

- Schematic Design Briefing on First Hill
- Update Briefing on Pacific Station (North Entrance)

Commissioners Present

Jon Layzer, Chair
Matthew Kitchen
Carolyn Law
Jack Mackie
Rick Sundberg
Paul Tomita

Staff Present

Debora Ashland, Sound Transit
Marty Curry, Planning Commission
Barbara Goldstein, Arts Commission
Lisa Merz, CityDesign
Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign

LRRP Business

Jon Layzer chaired the meeting. LRRP business was addressed, including approval of the minutes of April 26th as amended noting Jay's absence. Cheryl and Jon described their presentation to the Council Transportation Committee on LRRP's work to date, focusing on the status of schematic design review but also briefly discussing the Design Guidelines.

Cheryl also noted that she and Jack had attended the C-Link subcommittee meeting where the Royal Brougham and Lander stations were presented to Sound Transit Board members. Jack participated by sitting at the table and recapping the Panel's recommendation on both stations. Mary Jo Porter mentioned that the Board has asked staff and consultants not to use design "jargon" but to speak as plainly and clearly as possible. She invited LRRP members to attend future C-Link meetings.

The Panel resumed discussion of the draft action taken at the previous meeting on the Sound Transit public art program. Various ways to continue to integrate art and architecture were discussed. These pieces should be knit together in order to integrate the design elements. The system wide focus on landscape should continued to be explored. As the process progresses, we look for continued coordination and implementation. Jon said he is not clear about what position to take with respect to the art budget, but does believe staying flexible at this point is the best option. He acknowledged that LRRP is not the maker of the budget and that we can only provide input or recommendations. The idea not to specifically earmark money at this point, along with the need for flexibility, was agreed upon. The next document that STart produces will revisit allocation of funding. The panel wants to provide support for the art team and the questions of how we do that was discussed. The idea of how we interpret the 30% document and what we do about issues we have with it was talked about. The first step will be to draft a letter from the panel outlining concerns. Hopefully, this will help the team set some priorities.

Cheryl provided a status update on the Seattle Design Guidelines for Link Light Rail, along with a schedule for completing the work. The intent is for LRRP to review the guidelines in more detail on the July 7th retreat.

Schematic Design Briefing on First Hill

Stephen Antupit, SEATLAN
Allen Parker, Sound Transit
Graham McGarva, Baker McGarva Hart

First Hill is the only highrise neighborhood in the City and the community is very supportive of light rail. The workforce in the area has a critical need for housing, both low end and high end. In order for light rail to be successful, Madison needs to be an 18-hour street with lots of activity. The Station Area Planning work last summer showed that Sound Transit will be controlling a full block of highrise real estate, and the station design needs to address this. Also noted is that it is critical to get the transit-oriented development worked out within the design/build schedule that Sound Transit has. Sound Transit is testing the feasibility of various development options. Elevator shaft designs are in progress and the Station Area Planning work is now before City Council.

The station architects have been asked to redesign the station for potential 100% overbuilding of the west entrance, and partial overbuilding of the east entrance (back half). We are analyzing development up to the 160' height limit. We need to be able to maintain operations at all times so that transit use is not interrupted by development of the site.

The essence of time is very evident in this neighborhood. There are old and new structures, which results in the area continually reinventing itself. The basket or beacon of light concept will help the functional circulation aspect of the stations. There is a proud residential past along with a current institutional character. The east station house at Madison will look like a porch or veranda. It is being designed as a stand-alone structure with an open space plaza. The glazing will reflect tracery and light. As the user walks toward this station, something will be glowing and some type of lanterns will be a major element. The west station house may have development all around it. The lantern effect will also be here. The building surface will be sandstone and will represent a strong, single mass. It won't be "tricked up" to try to attract attention, but rather stand strong and sleek. The canopies are there to keep people dry.

Discussion

- Is it a solid wall at the top of the plaza? *(A 30' vent shaft with potential to develop commercial space on top.)*
- There were reasons to make the station entrances the same, but now they are different—why? *(There isn't one design language here in this neighborhood. Every block provides glimpses into different eras.)*
- Show how the stations would look with development on top of them. It is difficult to design to an unknown future, but it is hard to evaluate the stations without some sense of what future development might look like and how it might relate to the station entrances.
- How does the connection to Seattle University happen? *(Down Boylston and across Madison.)* This is a very important connection.
- Would Sound Transit develop the rest of the one-story base? *(Depends on timing of TOD, but this probably can't happen anyway before 2005 because of staging needs.)*
- Consider somehow taking better advantage of the stairs on Madison.
- The way the glass engages the elevators is more refined with the front part of the west entrance.
- Recognizing the development may occur much later, the plaza needs more focus. How can you activate it now for short term uses? *(We are talking about a memory garden and history reference on the east entrance, and an inventiveness theme on the west entrance.)*
- Provide power for an espresso stand and develop the stairs more as a gathering area.
- The trees seem to cut off the rest of the plaza. Is there screening at the alley or a tall wall there?
- How is the user moving in and out of station? *(At the west station, the user may cross Madison Street and there will be an "open corner" glass box which can be entered. The east entrance will be*

a major link to the Seattle University campus. There is an ongoing set of discussion with the City and Sound transit as to how this can best be achieved.)

- The east station stairs should be used to maximize the open space area. Hopefully this will increase the visibility of the lantern house of the east station.
- There are not many trees in the area. *(This is because the maintenance door has to come out of Madison, the code does not allow for alley access).*
- Panel is concerned that the tunnel stations are all looking the same, especially this one with respect to the U-District Station. The sandstone and glass seems the same. If this is all a theme, is there any differentiation? *(Some things are being pursued in relation to all the tunnel stations. One of Sound Transit's objectives is to have station identity.)*
- At the west entrance, what was the rationale for setting the station back? *(As design progresses, they wanted to look at the building and various scenarios on what it could look like).*
- There is a desperate need for design guidelines for developers that are going to be involved with the stations. *(Sound Transit will develop guidelines for developers in concurrency with individual station design).*
- There is similarity with the U-District Station. This may provoke artist to go in different directions. *(Art team hasn't committed to working on lanterns. The art money needs to be redistributed and may not have enough for tunnel stations. It may be wise not to depend on the art program to distinguish station identity).*

Discussion concluded and the Panel moved to the following recommendation.

Recommendation

The Panel appreciates that Sound Transit and its consultants have reexamined the opportunity for transit-oriented development on these sites, and are redesigning station entrances to accommodate future development. The Panel recommends approval of the schematic design as presented, and requests refinement of several elements as the design progresses:

- ***Further consideration of what form development on the west entrance site might take and how it might relate to both the station entrance and the urban design of Madison Street;***
- ***Design guidelines for transit-oriented development on these sites, urging that these be developed as quickly as possible in order to be useful in current and ongoing discussions with developers;***
- ***Changing the relationship of glass to stone in the west entrance to better match the east entrance;***
- ***Exploration of a midblock crossing on Broadway and related street improvements to better connect the station to Seattle University, carefully addressing pedestrian safety in the design;***
- ***More development of the stairs and plaza at the east entrance to ensure they work as a gathering place for short term uses/vendors; and***
- ***Design of the fire/maintenance door (east entrance) in coordination with the retaining wall, planter, and stairs as an aesthetic whole.***

Update Briefing on Pacific Station (North Entrance)

Ron Endlich, Sound Transit

Don Miles, ZGF

The Pacific Street station north entrance, which was previously proposed for the Church of Latter Day Saints site, has been relocated to the U.W. Gould Hall expansion site. In the process, the station tunnel has been stretched apart which has resulted in the concourse being 45 feet longer than originally planned. The design concept is still the same—a half round stationhouse matching the south entrance. The station

will have a sandstone base with fitted glass above. The vent shaft projects up four feet. The bike center is currently on hold, since there isn't room for it on the new site. Consequently, the bike center would be off site to both station entrances. This station will probably not be an overbuild. The question of the elevators is being presented to the panel. Should they face north up 15th Avenue, or south toward the Burke Gilman trail and other station entrance?

Discussion

- I'm very disappointed that the bike station is disappearing. It was one of the great things about this station. It is unfortunate to see it on the back burner with no champion. What can be done about this? *(It can still be addressed through the U of W Master Plan. It would require further coordination with the U of W to site it on other property they own.)*
- Where would the bike racks be? *(At both ends of the station)*. It is hard to imagine cyclists parking their bike, then walking a block to catch the rail.
- How many bikes are we talking about? *(About 250-270 bikes which would need about 3,000 square feet of storage space.)*
- We do not want to see the bike issue dropped. Sound Transit is encouraged to address this more with U of W, either through their master plan or the agreement regarding these stations.
- Are there any improvements envisioned along 15th? *(Fifteenth Avenue is considered a green street).*
- A green street is more than trees. Only trees were shown on site boards. *(The width of the crosswalk on the east side is going to be widened. The whole corridor is being looked at, along with transit canopies that are integral with this design. U of W is conducting their own study. Results may be included in their master plan).*
- The glass walls portray a blank feel. *(This was designed to create a waterfall effect).*
- Move the pedestrian path north a bit to eliminate the jog as it crosses 15th Avenue from the campus--this would lead to a stronger sense of design with the rest of the campus.
- I like the relationship of the two entrances facing one another, and yet I'm feeling more compelled by the north-facing entrance design. If the elevators faced north, it would provide a loose, curved, design element toward the pedestrian path. Ticketing could be provided in the Gould Hall expansion area.
- Yes, there is a stronger relationship to the site with the north-facing design.
- What about rain protection for the ticket vending area and bike racks? *(We'll have cover for the ticket vending.)*
- What about drop-off areas or space for pullouts? *(We will address that, although it isn't reflected yet in these drawings.)*
- The north-facing design provides a good relationship with the Gordon Vary garden.

Recommendation

The Panel thanks the consultants for clear and illustrative graphics with which to review the design alternatives, and the candor with which the alternatives were presented for the Panel's response. The Panel expresses support for the north-facing station entrance design on the Gould Hall expansion site, and requests further work on the following elements as design progresses:

- ***Encourage the University of Washington to consider realigning its proposed pedestrian path running east/west from campus across 15th Avenue in a straight line;***
- ***Coordinate with the University on development of a bike center to meet the high bicycle use expected at this station;***
- ***Activate the "lantern" wall to create a stronger relationship with the pedestrian path (perhaps nudging the wall slightly into the path); and***

- *More exploration of what it means to create a "green street" at this location.*

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.